

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration is requested. Claims 1-10, 14-17 and 19-27 are now presented. Claims 1-6, 9, 10 and 17 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 11-13 and 18 are cancelled. Claims 19-27 are new.

Amendments have been made to the specification to correct typographical and translation errors, and in response to the Examiner's objections.

The claims have been amended in response to the Examiner's comments.

Claims 7, 8 and 11-16 have been rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The claims have been amended to remove to the Examiner's objections.

Claims 7, 11-16 and 18 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by Bryan et al., US 2002/0128715 A1 (Bryan), and Claim 8 has been rejected under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Bryan. However, Bryan does not disclose a core comprising an upper body, a lower body and an intermediate elastic body between and separating the upper and lower bodies. Therefore, the amended claims are patentable over Bryan. Further, the specific structure of the core as claimed in the amended claims allows achieving a particularly advantageous damping effect in the vertical direction parallel to the vertebral column. The properties of the core can be predetermined by the selection of appropriate damping capability of the intermediate elastic body. The damping properties can be selected substantially independent from the material of the upper and lower bodies. Bryan does not give any hint to provide such a structure to the core.

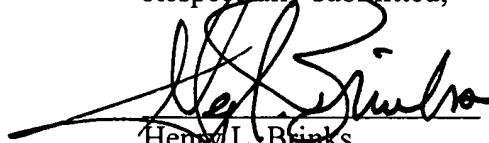
Accordingly, the amended claims are neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by Bryan.

Appl. No. 10/660,452  
Amdt. Dated October 26, 2006  
Reply to Office Action of June 26, 2006

**CONCLUSION**

Reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested. The Specification and claims have been amended in response to the Examiner's comments. The claims now appear to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously requested at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,



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October 26, 2006